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SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OIIP KMDR KPAO JA
SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - NORTH KOREA, PRESIDENT OBAMA'S TRIP TO EAST ASIA, AND AFGHANISTAN

¶1. LEAD STORIES: All Friday morning papers gave front-page coverage to the Lower House passage early Friday morning of legislation allowing small- and medium-sized companies to defer loan payments to banks.

¶2. "U.S. to Press Denuclearization in Comprehensive Manner" On President Obama's announcement regarding Special Representative Bosworth's planned trip to North Korea in early December, the moderate Yomiuri wrote (11/20): "In previous talks, North Korea has raised the stakes repeatedly in order to obtain incentives. While President Obama declared that a similar mistake will not be repeated, it will not be easy for the U.S. to formulate a roadmap for the resumption of the Six-Party Talks without allowing North Korea to set the pace."

¶3. "'China Shift' Apparent" On the conclusion of President Obama's East Asian tour, the top circulation, moderate Yomiuri stated (11/20): "By broadcasting closer relations with China in order to deal with 'issues of global implications in this century,' the President during his trip highlighted the reality that the focus of U.S. diplomacy toward Asia is shifting from Japan and South Korea to China.... The U.S.'s posture of expecting China to take greater responsibility in the security arena could be taken as Washington's endorsement of China's arms expansion and its maritime strategy, and runs the risk of triggering tensions between China and its Asian neighbors."

¶4. "President Stops Short of Addressing Issues at Hand" The business-oriented Nikkei claimed in a report from Seoul (11/20): "Reflecting on the fact that the former Bush administration was too preoccupied with the war on

terrorism to pay sufficient attention to Asia, the President during his trip to Asia achieved his goal of demonstrating U.S. presence in the region. However, the President avoided in-depth discussions and instead played it safe in talks held in Japan, China, and South Korea in order to put priority on enhancing the mood of friendship. The U.S. reaction to the presidential tour has been rather cool, and it has been described as 'neither a failure nor a success.'"

¶5. "Eradication of Corruption, Cabinet Formation Hold Key" On the launch of the second Karzai administration, a correspondent for the conservative Sankei reported from Kabul (11/20): "It is becoming clear that improvement of the administration's mechanisms that have allowed corruption and fraud is the 'condition' [for President Karzai] to receive support from the international community - support which is key to the restoration of security and stability in Afghanistan. During his inauguration address, President Karzai went to great lengths to speak about measures against corruption and fraud, and underscored his readiness to respond to the international community's concerns. It is necessary for the president to move swiftly to take effective measures."

ROOS